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Multi-stakeholder dialogue segment

Multi-stakeholder dialogue segment

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum**

Dialogue paper by youth***

Priorities and initiatives for partnerships in sustainable development: youth major group

Introduction

1. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, youth from around the world have gathered many times to join in efforts to identify priority issues for the future. Youth recognize efforts made at the Rio summit to address sustainable development. Yet, as the future generation, we are highly frustrated at the continued lack of commitment and political will to implement its outcomes. Youth have closely followed the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and note the distressing lack of concrete and timely proposals for real sustainable development implementation.

2. As outlined in chapter 25 of Agenda 21[1] and principle 21 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[2] increased meaningful participation of youth and children at all levels of decision-making processes is required, particularly in the framework for sustainable development where intergenerational equity is essential. Governments and local authorities must include democratically elected youth delegates in all international, national, regional and local meetings.

3. The priorities and possible partnerships outlined in the framework below are based on several youth initiatives, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Youth Forum, the work of youth delegates who attended the second and third sessions of the Commission on Sustainable

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**The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

***Prepared by the youth caucus of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the international youth review of chapter 25 of Agenda 21, as well as input obtained through the youth caucus of the World Summit on Sustainable Development LISTSERV.

1. Youth priorities for sustainable development

4. Youth affirm that there are a number of prerequisites for the realization of sustainable development. These include achieving peace, democracy, transparency in Governments, the eradication of corruption, the elimination of discrimination in all forms, and the stabilization of the human population and living within the limits of the earth's carrying capacity. We also demand the right of indigenous people to self-determination, to access to land and to resources. We continue to stress that sustainable development is an effective alternative to militarization in ensuring peace.

5. We continue to demand poverty eradication by recognizing the growing gap between rich and poor, and we demand the immediate cancellation of the external debt of developing countries. All developed countries must meet the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance (ODA). We also demand the acknowledgement of the ecological and social debt of industrialized countries.

6. We call for empowerment of young people through self-reliant sustainable communities. Recognizing that humans and nature are more important than the profits of transnational corporations, we demand corporate accountability, and that international trade agreements be re-evaluated based on sustainability and, when necessary, cancelled.

7. We demand access to information and empowerment through formal and informal education and information and communication technologies (ICT) to promote an overall awareness on sustainable development. Sustainable livelihoods must be ensured through increased job training programmes and increased employment opportunities.

8. We are upset with the minimal implementation of chapter 36 of Agenda 21 on promoting education, public awareness and training. Basic education for children and youth (boys and girls) must be guaranteed by 2010. Sustainable development awareness must be integrated into all educational programmes at all levels.

9. Excessive consumption in developed nations occurs at the expense of developing nations which themselves have the potential for excessive consumption in the future. Dealing with this must include fair trade, product life-cycle management, and climate justice through renewable energy. We further encourage Governments and industries to remove unsustainable subsidies, adopt cleaner production technologies, and green taxes, minimize production of toxic chemicals and greenhouse gases and put limits on corporate advertising pollution in public spaces.

10. Without water there is no life for people or the planet, yet we continue to use this resource in an unsustainable manner. Without forests, water resources cannot survive. We urge for immediate action to stop the destruction of forests. We encourage national Governments, the United Nations system and stakeholders to educate citizens on sustainable water management. We insist on the implementation of international laws and treaties to protect freshwater supplies.

11. We demand governmental action in combating human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) by advocating women's empowerment, safer sex, comprehensive sexual health education, availability of sterile needles and access to treatment. We further demand that integrated practical policies be financed to stabilize the pandemic by 2005 and reduce the spread by 2010.

2. Youth initiatives for possible partnerships

12. The youth put forth a strong call and appeal to all Member States, United Nations agencies, civil society structures and business to reach out and invest in the skills and abilities of young people in a much more meaningful and effective manner. As youth, we have shown willingness and commitment with respect to playing an active role in our development and that of our communities.

13. As part of the Johannesburg outcomes, partnerships must also be embedded in the values and

principles of transparency, equality, equity, redress of past imbalances, and integrated participation.

Education

14. The following actions are urged:

(a) Engage in programmes to educate and train communities, including work-based education on sustainable development issues in partnerships with institutions of learning, trade unions, business, local authorities and other interested partners;

(b) Utilize university campuses as sustainable models for other offices and institutions in society, with local student groups working together with the administration to use only renewable and sustainable resources on campuses;

(c) Integrate sustainability knowledge in business, engineering and law educational programmes (as well as all other higher education), with local partnerships setting up working groups at the local level for integration of sustainability awareness in their educational programmes;

(d) Establish sustainable information technology centres with virtual classrooms in rural communities, networked with universities. Using multimedia conferencing methodologies, young people can be trained in areas of their interest and learn new skills and techniques, such as organic sustainable agriculture techniques.

Youth participation in decision-making

15. The following action is urged:

Form local youth arenas for participation in decision-making such as local youth councils with real power and adequate funding for their activities. This shall guarantee youth participation in decision-making on the local level.

Employment and poverty reduction

16. The following actions are urged:

(a) Seek partnerships aimed at increasing employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. Youth must participate in the development of national action plans on youth employment, including promotion of entrepreneurship among youth through provision of better information, training, and access to resources and professional mentoring programmes;

(b) Engage in capacity-building programmes leading to employment such as vocational training and microcredit loans in order to create small-scale businesses. This could be done in partnership with local authorities and non-governmental organizations owing to their direct interaction with communities at the grass-roots level.

Sustainable production and consumption

17. The following actions are urged:

(a) Set up guidelines to ensure advertisements that promote sustainable lifestyles among children and youth and implement national consumer awareness campaigns in overdeveloped countries aimed at reducing excessive consumption;

(b) Partner with local authorities to establish and maintain advertisement-free zones in public parks, in schools and in universities, replacing advertisements with artwork created by youth and children or messages promoting individual lifestyle choices.

18. In addition to legally binding accountability rules, youth seek partnerships to hold corporations accountable for unsustainable production patterns. The overall aim is to avoid environmental degradation, and violations of laws and human rights.

Freshwater

19. The following action is urged:

Work together towards, during and after the International Year of Freshwater in 2003 to educate younger generations on protecting, managing and respecting the world's water resources.

Health

20. Youth seek partnerships that support initiatives for engagement in effective peer-to-peer sexual health education, implementing programmes aimed at promoting the concept and practice of positive living, as well as for putting in place mechanisms to ensure behavioural change among youth in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

3. Conclusion

21. As youth, we will continue to make sustainable development a reality. We call for an ethical framework for sustainable development in accordance with national, regional and local priorities. We commit ourselves to the aforementioned priorities and commitments, and demand the implementation of concrete and timely actions for sustainable development. These must be effected within an acceptable global governance and financing framework that recognizes the need for strengthening the economies of developing countries.

22. The World Summit on Sustainable Development must yield real plans for action and cannot follow a long line of empty promises and missed opportunities. Signatures are not enough. We need concrete actions to ensure a better future!

23. Youth must be part of that process!

Notes

[1] ***Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992***, vol. I, ***Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*** (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Ibid., annex I.